

CLAIMS

We claim:

1 1. Method for conducting communications within
2 collaboration space, comprising the steps of:

3 organizing said collaboration space to include a place;

4 said place being implemented as a directory; and

5 establishing synchronous communications as a chat
6 session between two or more parties visiting said
7 place.

1 2. The method of claim 1, said collaboration space being
2 further organized according to an object model including
3 said place, and further including room, folder, page,
4 member, form, field, placetype, roomtype, skin, and placebot
5 objects.

1 3. The method of claim 1, further comprising the steps of:
2
3 presenting said collaboration space to each said party
4 at respective browsers;
5
6 displaying at said browsers a graphical user interface
7 including a chat window for presenting to each said
8 party the identity of other parties visiting said place
 and selectors for requesting and accepting said
 synchronous communications.

1 4. The method of claim 3, further comprising the step of:
2
3 responsive to place manager input, selectively enabling
 said synchronous communications.

1 5. The method of claim 3, further comprising the steps of:
2
3 displaying a chat session transcript in respective chat
4 windows to all parties participating in said chat
 session.

1 6. The method of claim 3, further comprising the step of:

2 responsive to party selection, selectively opening or
3 opening and minimizing said chat window, said chat
4 session including those parties which have opened or
5 opened and minimized said chat window.

1 7. Method for communicating between users in collaboration
2 space, comprising the steps of:

3 establishing a place within said collaboration space
4 and enabling a chat feature among members of said
5 place; and

6 responsive to member selection, enabling a user who is
7 a member of said place to chat selectively with one
8 other member, a plurality of other members, or with all
9 members of said place who currently have an open chat
10 window.

1 8. The method of claim 7, further comprising the step of:

2 displaying in a chat window of each member joining a

3 chat session for said place a transcript of said
4 session.

1 9. The method of claim 7, further comprising the steps of:

2 responsive to user selection at said chat window, for
3 said user selectively joining a chat session, sending a
4 chat message, replying to a chat message, leaving said
5 chat session, and extending a chat invitation to
6 another user.

1 10. The method of claim 7, further comprising the step of
2 opening said chat window to enable receipt of an invitation
3 to join a chat session.

1 11. The method of claim 10, further comprising the steps
2 of:

3 displaying in said chat window a list of members
4 currently active in said place; and
5 sending a chat message to a member selected from said

6 list.

1 12. The method of claim 10, further comprising the steps
2 of:

3 selecting from said list a plurality of members
4 currently active in said place; and

5 sending an invitation to join a chat session to said
6 plurality of members.

1 13. The method of claim 10, further comprising the step
2 responsive to receiving a chat message from a first member
3 of said place, communicating said chat message to all
4 members currently active in said place.

1 14. The method of claim 13, said members currently active
2 in said place being all members in said list, and said chat
3 message being displayed in a transcript area of said chat
4 window.

1 15. The method of claim 9, further comprising the steps of:

2 displaying an invitation dialog box at the browser of a
3 member of said place receiving an invitation to join a
4 chat session;

5 said invitation dialog box providing buttons for user
6 selection to respond to said invitation to the sender
7 only, to join said chat session, or to decline said
8 invitation and close said dialog box.

1 16. The method of claim 15, further comprising the step of:

2 providing at said browser a selectable control for
3 defining this user's availability state and toggling
4 off said chat feature to an awareness selector, said
5 awareness selector upon selection displaying said list.

1 17. The method of claim 16, said awareness selector being
2 reciprocal to prevent lurking.

1 18. The method of claim 17, further comprising the step of

2 maintaining said availability state persistent across
3 sessions.

1 19. The method of claim 18, further comprising the step of
2 loading a transcript of a prior session to said chat window
3 upon being opened.

1 20. System for synchronous communications between users in
2 collaboration space, comprising:

3 a server;

4 a plurality of browsers for presenting user interfaces
5 to a place in said collaboration space; and

6 said user interface including a chat window for
7 displaying messages and replies to messages as a
8 temporary transcript of a chat session among members of
9 said place.

1 21. The system of claim 20, further comprising:

2 said user interface including a sidebar selector for
3 opening said chat session;

4 responsive to said selector, said chat window
5 displaying a list of members with open chat windows to
6 said place;

7 responsive to user selection of a selected member from
8 said list, establishing synchronous communications with
9 said selected member.

1 22. The system of claim 21, further comprising a selector
2 button for minimizing said chat window thereby continuing
3 said user as a member of said chat session while clearing
4 said user interface of said chat window.

1 23. The system of claim 22, further comprising a chat
2 button for opening said chat window to initiate a chat
3 session and receive invitations to join chat sessions.

1 24. The system of claim 23, further comprising an option
2 menu associated with said chat window for entering

3 invitations to a plurality of members selected from said
4 list to join a chat session.

1 25. The system of claim 24, further comprising a secure
2 message selector operable upon selection to prevent
3 interception of said messages and replies to messages.

1 26. The system of claim 24, further comprising:

2 an invitation dialog box for display at the browser of
3 a member of said place receiving an invitation to join
4 a chat session;

5 said invitation dialog box providing buttons for user
6 selection to respond to said invitation to the sender
7 only, to join said chat session, or to decline said
8 invitation and close said dialog box.

1 27. The system of claim 26, further comprising:

2 a user selectable control for defining this user's
3 availability state and toggling off said chat feature

4 to an awareness selector, said awareness selector upon
5 selection displaying said list.

1 28. The system of claim 27, said awareness selector being
2 reciprocal to prevent lurking.

1 29. The system of claim 27, said availability state being
2 persistent across sessions.

1 30. The system of claim 29, said chat window further upon
2 being opened loading a transcript of a prior session.

1 31. A program storage device readable by a machine,
2 tangibly embodying a program of instructions executable by a
3 machine to perform method steps for conducting
4 communications within collaboration space, said method steps
5 comprising:

6 organizing said collaboration space to include a place;
7 said place being implemented as a directory; and

8 establishing synchronous communications as a chat
9 session between two or more parties visiting said
10 place.

1 32. A program storage device readable by a machine,
2 tangibly embodying a program of instructions executable by a
3 machine to perform method steps for conducting
4 communications within collaboration space, said method steps
5 comprising:

6 establishing a place within said collaboration space
7 and enabling a chat feature among members of said
8 place; and

9 responsive to member selection, enabling a user who is
10 a member of said place to chat selectively with one
11 other member, a plurality of other members, or with all
12 members of said place who currently have an open chat
13 window.

1 33. A computer program product or computer program element
2 for conducting communications within collaboration space by
3 organizing said collaboration space to include a place; said

4 place being implemented as a directory; and establishing
5 synchronous communications as a chat session between two or
6 more parties visiting said place.

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